

Wasatch County Hospital Part of New Cardiac Emergency Network

cardiac centers are also pleased with the things the new network will provide. "This (the exchange of information) is the real strength of this new network," said Dr. Ronald Assay, a cardiologist at UVRMC. "The advances in cardiac medicine are changing so rapidly that it is hard for a cardiologist to keep up on all the new information available, and recognize the signs of a heart attack," Dr. Frischknecht said. "By having the chance to see Streptokinase as a treatment modality or angioplasty, we save them the money from a hospital stay for open heart surgery. So ultimately, this network will help bring down the hospital costs, which is always a good thing."

Part of the education process of the public that the network will concentrate on, is informing them of all the options available in the treatment of a heart condition. By teaching people to arrive at the hospital sooner, their options for treatment are greater, according to Dr. John F. Frischknecht of UVRMC, which in turn can help reduce their chances of the need for open heart surgery; this in turn brings down hospital costs, to the patient and the public.

"There are many things available to the patient for treatment if we can educate them to come in early and recognize the signs of a heart attack," Dr. Frischknecht said. "By having the chance to see Streptokinase as a treatment modality or angioplasty, we save them the money from a hospital stay for open heart surgery. So ultimately, this network will help bring down the hospital costs, which is always a good thing."

Anyone wanting more information about the new network can contact Wasatch County Hospital at 654-2500, or Kris Walker at UVRMC. Walker is the coordinator of the network at the Provo facility and can be reached by calling 373-7850, ext. 7231.



Some people don't even realize when they are having a heart attack. Those who do, one-quarter never make it to the hospital; and, those who do make it to the hospital, generally wait approximately three hours before seeking help, thus causing irreversible damage to the heart.

These are just some of the reasons why on July 1, Intermountain Health Care inaugurated the Intermountain Cardiac Emergency Network and designated Wasatch County Hospital as one of the 21 hospitals in the network that covers Utah, Idaho and Wyoming.

Wasatch County Hospital was featured on regional television by KTVX Channel 4 on June 24 in an effort to show how the new network is a systematic team approach for treating heart attack victims with the latest therapeutic and technological interventions. Its goal is to save lives and prevent permanent damage to the heart.

Dr. Steven W. Lewis, Senior Vice President of IHC, said the new network, which is the largest of its kind in the United States, has three major components that include community education, enhanced interaction between 18 community hospitals and the three designated cardiac centers (Utah Valley Regional Medical Center, McKay Dec, and LDS Hospitals), and ongoing research.

"Educating the public is going to be a major thrust of this new network," Dr. Lewis said. "Many times a person does not know when she/he is suffering a heart attack. A patient does not always go through what people see in the movies and on television with the clutching of the chest and shortness of breath; and, a heart attack usually always lasts more than just a couple of minutes."

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Dr. Lewis explains that because many people do not understand what a heart attack really is, they then postpone getting help of any kind. "One-quarter of all patients never make it to the hospital," he said. "And on the average, the ones who make it have waited three

do no make it, have water under the bridge, and are not making it. By doing this, they are risking death and are doing major damage to the heart muscle. Damage that is irreversible. Therefore, the new network will develop a program among all the member hospital aimed at educating the general public to recognize the symptoms of a heart attack and urge them to seek emergency care when those symptoms appear.

A real strength of the new network is the enhanced interaction it affords all 18 community hospitals, such as Wasatch County, with the specialists and research being done at the three cardiac centers, which include not only UVRMC but also, LDS Hospital, and McKay Dee Hospital in Ogden.

"The network will provide improved access to 20 cardiac specialists throughout the system," Dr. Lewis said. "And the most important aspect of this will be that the patient's access to these people and the research they are doing, will be through their own community hospital."

The network will allow the physicians and hospitals to trade information concerning new treatments and techniques that will ultimately benefit patients at all 18 community facilities.

"We are excited about the new cardiac network and the advantages it affords our physicians and patients in our service area," said Wayne T. Terry, Wasatch County Hospital Administrator. "This is just another step in IHC's continuing mission to provide access to quality health care to all residents of the Intermountain West, whether they live in major metropolitan areas or in the Heber Valley."

Physicians at the three major